

Workers Struggles: Europe, Middle East & Africa

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The *World Socialist Web Site* invites workers and other readers to contribute to this regular feature.

Greek doctors continue strike

Doctors at the National Organization for Healthcare Provision (EOPYY), Greece's largest health care provider, have voted to continue their strike in opposition to job cuts and attacks on public health care. The doctors have been involved in rolling strikes since November and have extended the action until January 24

Doctors are opposed to a bill, which is before the Greek parliament and proposes to change terms, conditions and procedures of suspension and forcibly transfer employees from EOPYY to different health districts. The new measures include a new pay structure that reportedly sees them earning significantly less than other doctors in the ESY health provider.

Bulgarian tobacco farmers blockade road

Last Friday, around 1,000 tobacco farmers in the town of Gotse Delchev blockaded a road near the Greek border to protest the low prices they are being offered for their tobacco crops. Police surrounded the protesting farmers cordoning their demonstration.

Sacked Bulgarian shipbuilders resume protest

Around 30 employees who were sacked by Burgas Shipyards when the company came under new ownership have resumed their daily protest. The protest resumed Tuesday outside the bank that is the shipyards major creditor.

They vow to continue the protest one hour each day outside the bank until they are paid arrears of salaries owed them.

Glasgow care workers strike

Around 500 care workers employed by Glasgow city council in Scotland began a 48-hour strike Tuesday.

They are protesting changes in their shift allowances which the Unison

trade union calculates would leave care staff about £1,500 (\$2,460) a year worse off. They care for around 600 residents in homes for the elderly and disabled people.

Bus drivers to strike in Weymouth, England

Around 60 bus drivers in Weymouth, England employed by First Hampshire and Dorset announced a 24-hour strike to be held next Monday. They are demanding pay parity with colleagues in their area. Their pay rate is currently £8.30 (\$13.50) an hour, compared to drivers working for Yellow Buses in nearby Bournemouth who earn £10 (\$16.30) an hour.

Management has made a 1.5 percent pay offer covering the period April 2013 to April 2014 but say the deal must be self-financing through sick pay reductions. Unite, the union representing the drivers, is calling for pay to be increased to £9 (\$14.7) an hour with no strings attached.

Irish agricultural officers to begin industrial action

Around 600 technical agricultural officers employed by the Department of Agriculture in Ireland, are due to begin industrial action Monday. They are members of the Impact trade union.

Initially the action will take the form of a work to rule, which includes staff only reporting through existing line management. It is in response to management refusing to let agricultural officers have the opportunity to apply for assistant principal posts.

According to Impact, the industrial action will eventually lead to delays in grant payments and disruption to the export of agricultural products including livestock.

Irish crane factory workers reject Labour Court ruling

Workers at the German-owned Liebherr container crane factory in Killarney, Ireland have rejected mediation proposals put forward by the Labour Court. They are members of the Services Industrial Professional and Technical Union (SIPTU).

Liebherr staff took industrial action prior to Christmas including a one-day strike as members of the Liebherr family were hosting an international delegation at the site. The employees are seeking a 2.5 percent pay increase back dated to 2009; the Labour Court ruling decreed the pay

claim only be backdated to May 2012.

Liebherr has issued a statement saying the firm's 55 year presence in Killarney and a recent Euro 50 million (\$68 million) investment could not be taken as meaning re-location was ruled out. Local politicians have called for further mediation in an attempt to settle the dispute.

Turkish hospital contract workers vow to continue fight

This week contract workers at the Hacettepe University hospital in Ankara, Turkey have vowed to continue fighting to improve their conditions. They suffered delays in salary payments over a period of four years but following a two day picket of the hospital salary payments are now being paid on time.

Following a campaign for health and safety measures to be followed, the contracting firm sacked 50 of the contract workers. Following action by the sacked workers plus support of those still retained, the sacked contract workers were re-instated.

Strike by Tunisian sanitation workers

Around 6,000 sanitation workers in the Greater Tunis metropolitan area, covering 17 municipalities, have been on strike since the end of last week. The workers' trade union, affiliated to the *Tunisian General Labour Union*, took the action following the government's failure to adhere to an improved pay agreement made in October last year.

Omani workers re-instated

At the end of last week over 500 Omani workers, sacked from their jobs following a hunger strike, have been re-instated. They are members of the General Union of Workers and were employed by an oil company. They began the hunger strike to complain about the standard of food served to junior staff. Under the settlement the workers are forbidden to take any further industrial action.

West Bank health workers strike

Health service workers, members of the Union of Health Service Employees employed by the Palestinian Ministry of Health came out on strike Sunday.

They are protesting the employer's decision to grant some health workers a pay increase but not others. Those not granted a pay increase include kitchen and laundry staff and registration officers.

Strike by United Nations in the West Bank enters seventh week

The strike by United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine

Refugees (UNRWA) has entered its seventh week. They are demanding a pay increase, UNRWA for its part says it has a funding shortfall and is unable to pay any increase.

On Sunday UNRWA staff set up roadblocks around Ramallah in an attempt to draw attention to their dispute. Police used tear gas and stun grenades to disperse them.

Medical staff strikes in Lagos, Nigeria

A strike by medical staff at Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH) is continuing. Health workers represented by the Joint House Unions and Associations (JHUA), comprising several unions covering medical practitioners, midwives and nurses, are on strike over payment of salaries and overtime, lack of promotion opportunities, staff shortages and shortages of essential supplies.

Nigerian power workers postpone planned strike

An all-out strike by Nigerian electricity workers, members of the National Union of Electricity Employees (NUEE), due to begin Tuesday has been suspended for two weeks. The operatives are employed by the former Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN), which was privatised two months ago.

Following the privatisation, trade union officials who had worked at PHCN were sacked and some of the work in the newly privatised company was casualised. NUEE also say many thousands of retired staff have not been paid their pension entitlements; other workers including those currently employed by the successor private company are owed entitlements.

The suspension of the strike follows talks on Monday between relevant government ministries, NUEE and employers representatives. Following the meeting an agreement stipulated that all PHCN staff that had been laid off would receive their severance benefits before the end of this month. The agreement also covered the payment of pension entitlements and other benefits.

Sudanese oil workers strike

Employees working for the Adila oil exploration company in East Darfur came out on strike at the beginning of the New Year. The 200 staff were employed by the company as daily labourers. They are striking to demand they are employed in accordance with Sudanese law and be given fixed contracts.

Kenyan media workers walk out

Around 50 employees at the Mombasa based radio station, Radio Rahma, went on strike at the end of last week. They are demanding better pay and working conditions. The radio station is owned by Mvita MP Abdulswamad Sharrif Nassir.

A spokesman for the striking workers told the press they were seeking a 50 percent pay increase and job security. He also explained that on joining the radio station they were informed their contracts would be renewed every two years but many staff have not had a renewed contract for more than five years. Nassir failed to attend a planned meeting with the workers.



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